

Intelligence, Personality and so much more

Psychology and the Popular Media

How TV and Movies Portray
Key Concepts in Psychology

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Psy 202

The Media and the Popularization of Scientific Concepts

- ❖ The popular media has a key role in shaping society's ideas of "normal", "acceptable", "unacceptable", etc.
- ❖ The media today is the place where difficult or elaborated scientific concepts are digested and incorporated by society.
- ❖ Globalization has turned most concepts into commodities, valid in culturally diverse environments.
- ❖ The media makes science accessible to the ordinary person, by simplifying and exemplifying. Often times this process leads to stereotyping.

One or many?

Intelligence: Attempt a Definition

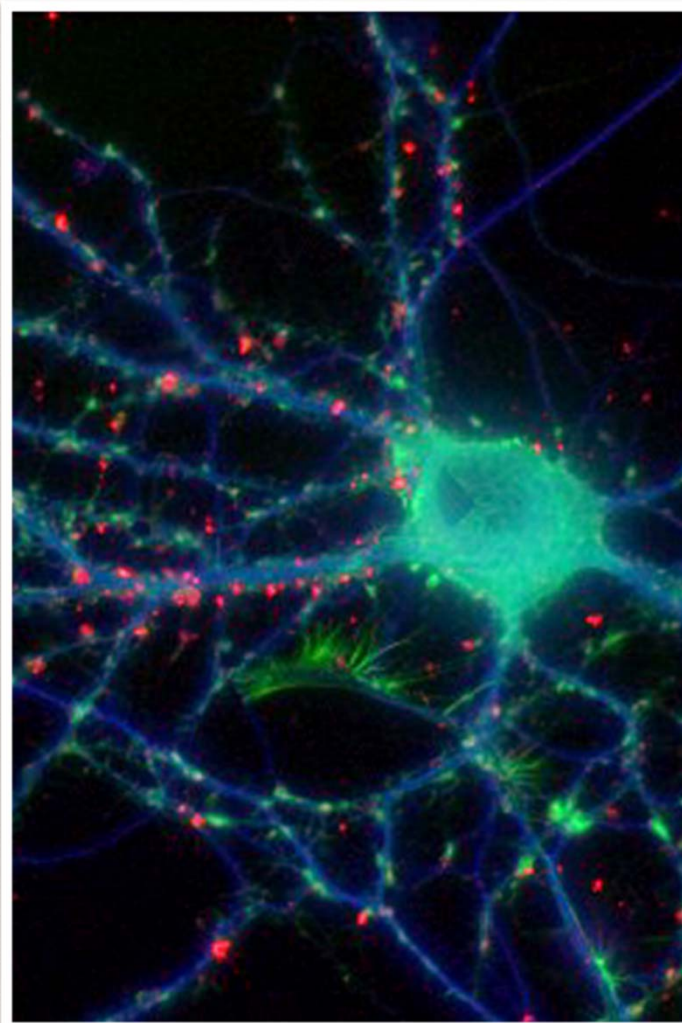
The ability to learn from experience, solve problems and use knowledge to adapt to new situations.

Intelligence is a concept.

Intelligence is contextual.

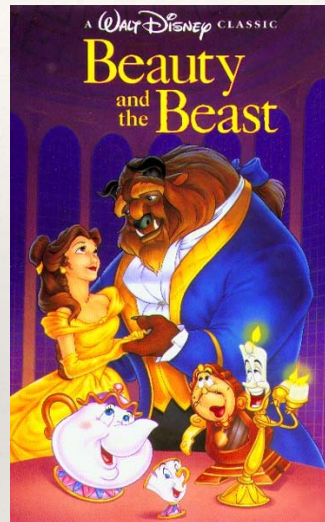
Intelligence impacts our entire life experience.

Intelligence is not all.



Charles Spearman's G (General Intelligence)

- ❖ Intelligent People often excel in more than one area.
- ❖ G can Predict academic achievement and professional success.
- ❖ G is more than academic ability.
- ❖ Thurstone differed but his data eventually supported the concept of G.



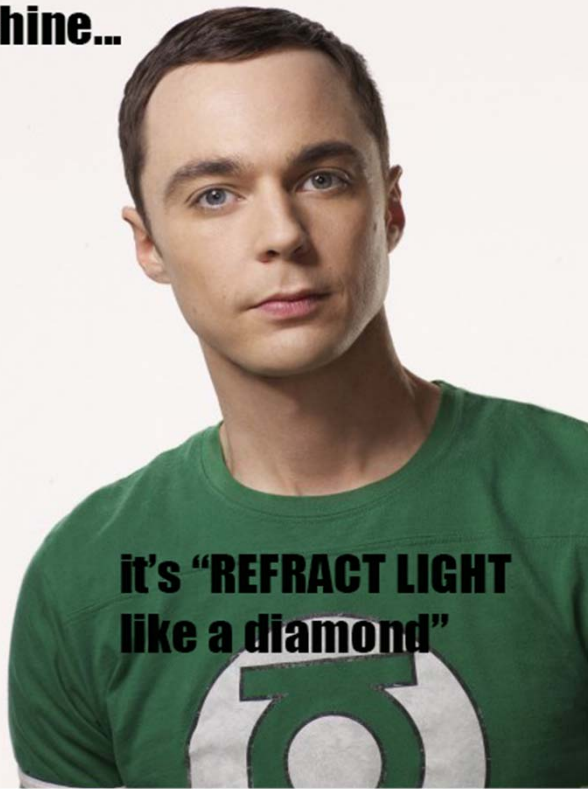
Smart and sensitive, hot and sensible or clever and resilient: some people seem to have it all.

Gardner and Sternberg: Multiple Intelligences

- ❖ Gardner: intelligence is complex. Idea of multiple Intelligences (eight)
- ❖ There are multiple abilities.
- ❖ Savant syndrome (the stupid genius).
- ❖ Sternberg: multiple intelligences (three)
- ❖ Analytical, creative and practical.



**Rihanna - Diamonds don't
shine...**



**it's "REFRACT LIGHT
like a diamond"**

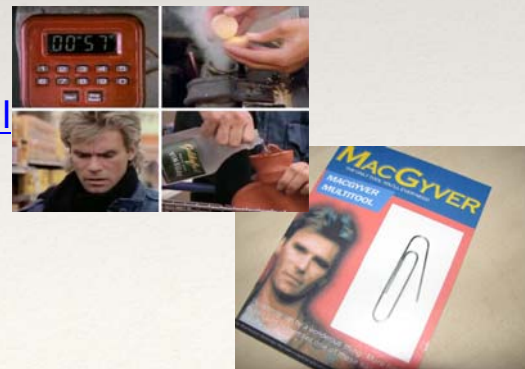


Examples of Logical, Musical and Kinesthetic intelligences as they are portrayed by TV and movies.

Intelligence and Creativity: Do They Correlate?

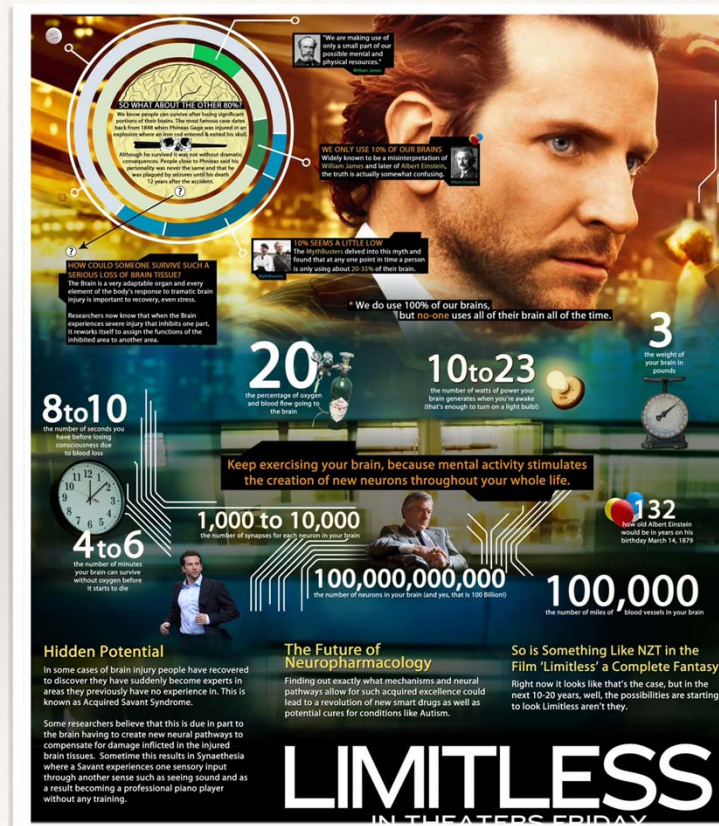
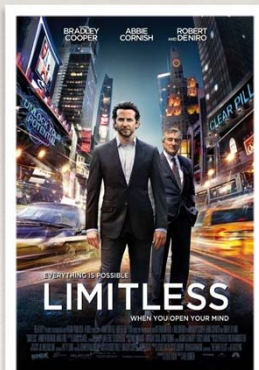
- ❖ Creativity: ability to produce ideas that are new and valuable.
- ❖ When it comes to Creativity, Intelligence and flexible thinking matter.
- ❖ Importance of both convergent and divergent thinking.
- ❖ Expertise, curiosity, intrinsic motivation and a nurturing environment foster creativity.
- ❖ Sir Ken Robinson on creativity:

http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html



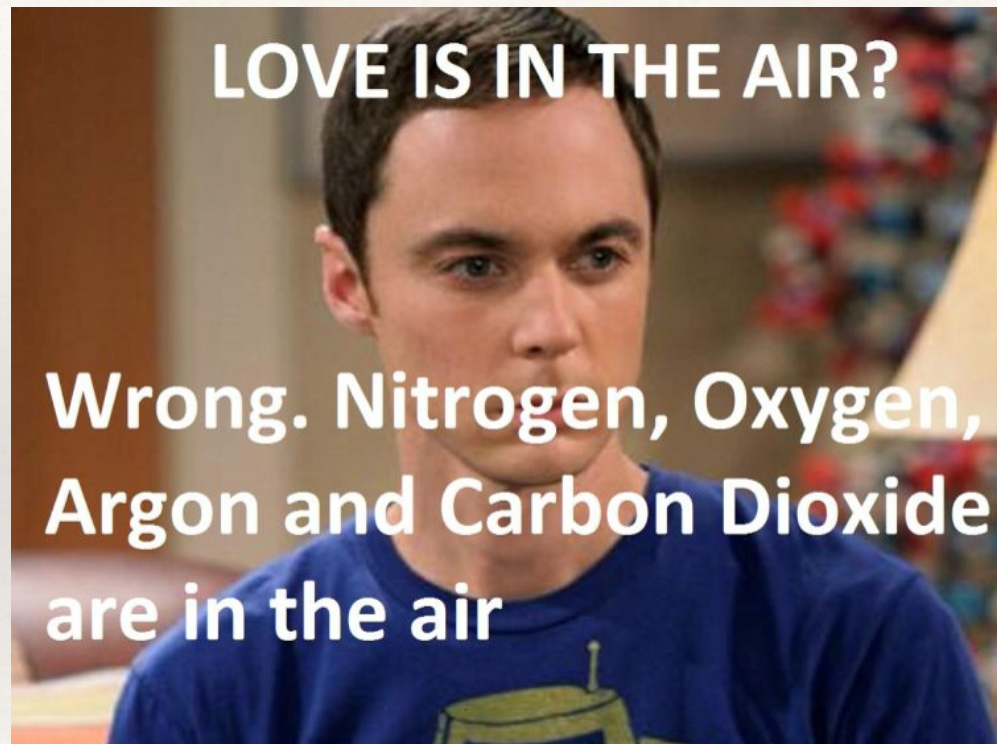
Can We Boost Intelligence?

- ❖ Many movies explore the possibilities offered by drugs and bio-chemical developments to artificially expand natural intelligence. Many times, the moral of the story is "don't even think of it".



Emotional Intelligence - Mayer, Salovey and Caruso

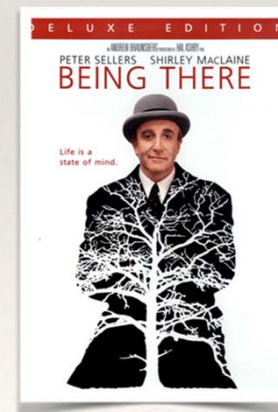
- ❖ Social Intelligence: successfully reading social situations.
- ❖ Smart doesn't mean emotionally intelligent.
- ❖ 4 components of emotional intelligence: perceiving, understanding, managing and using emotions.
- ❖ Personal unconscious processing of emotional info.

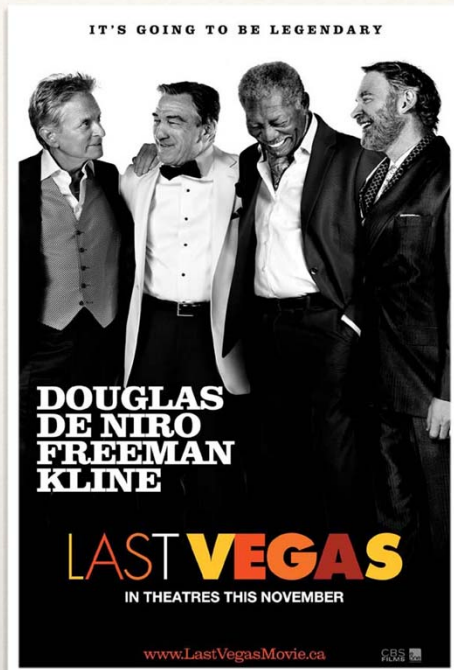


Big Bang Theory's Dr. Sheldon Cooper and his total lack of emotional intelligence.

Can We Tell Who is Intelligent?

- ❖ Size matters very little when it comes to correlate intelligence and brains.
- ❖ Testing is useful if we know what we are testing / measuring.
- ❖ Darwin, Binnet and Tierman: fit, smart and measurable.
- ❖ Crystallized vs. Fluid Intelligence.
- ❖ Intelligent people live longer and healthier lives.



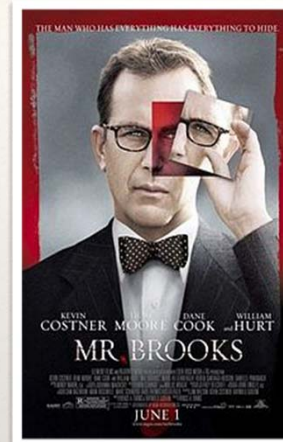
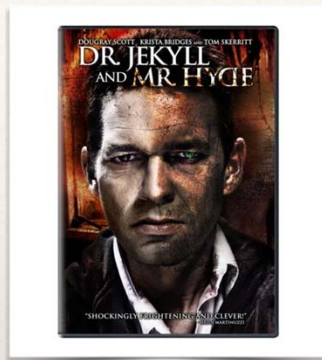


- ❖ Unlike science, media says that as they age, some people grow wiser, some stay the same, and other people's mental abilities wane.



Personality and Personality Disorders

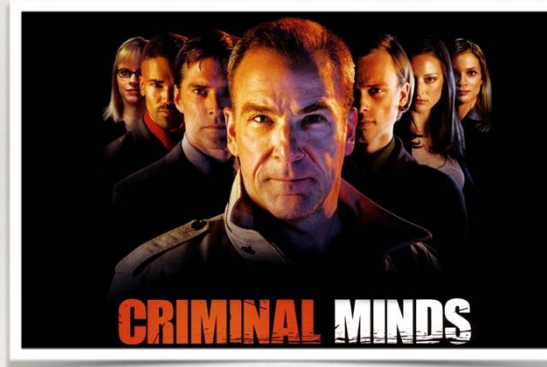
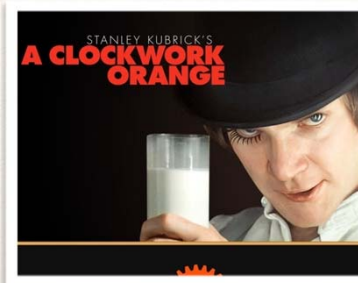
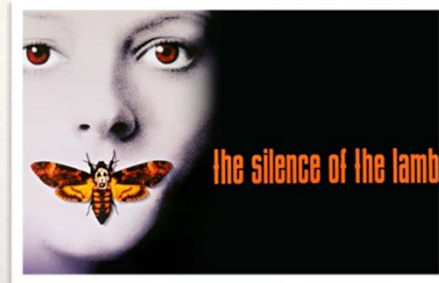
- ❖ Zelig
- ❖ Mr. Brooks
- ❖ Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
- ❖ Single White Female
- ❖ Thirteen



Many movies delve in the problems of abnormal, unstable or borderline personalities , often with a dramatic perspective, but sometimes from a humorous point of view

Sociopathies

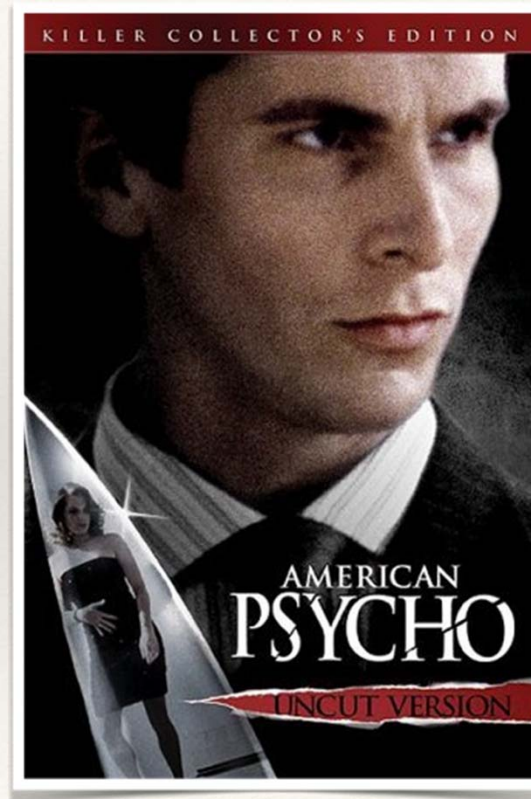
- ❖ Clockwork Orange
- ❖ Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
- ❖ The Silence of the Lambs
- ❖ Criminal Minds



Sociopaths are the center of many movies, sometimes portrayed as attractive and seductive. Entire TV series are based on them.

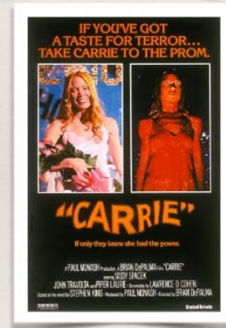
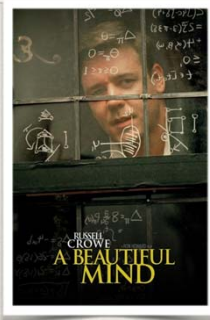
Sociopathies, Personality Disorders and the Freudian Theory of Personality

- ❖ In many cases, characters in movies that are portrayed as having abnormal personalities or behaviors could be described from a Freudian point of view as individuals with a very strong Id. They act based on its impulses and follow only the Pleasure Principle. Their Ego and Super Ego have little control over their actions.



Altered States of Consciousness

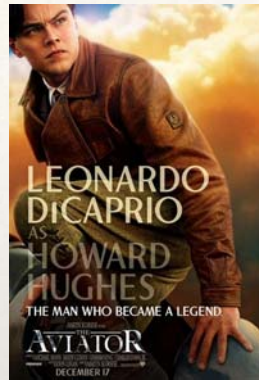
- ❖ Carrie
- ❖ The 6th sense
- ❖ Matilda
- ❖ A Beautiful Mind
- ❖ The Three Faces of Eve



Telekinesis, ultra sensory perception and delusions due to schizophrenia are presented to both children and adult audiences. Many times, the abnormal behavior results from traumatic experiences or repression.

Anxiety Disorders

- ❖ The Aviator
- ❖ As Good as it Gets
- ❖ Monk



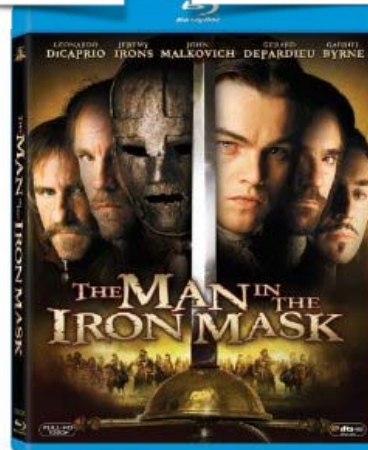
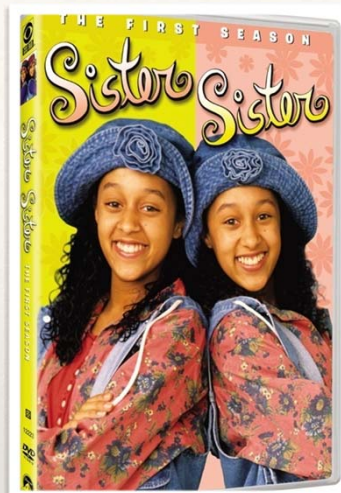
Anxiety Disorders, phobias and obsessive compulsive disorder are the center of many popular TV series and movies. Most Sufferers are presented as highly intelligent and quite functional

Personality and Intelligence

Are they biologically or environmentally determined?

- ❖ Sister Sister
- ❖ The Parent Trap
- ❖ The Man in the Iron Mask

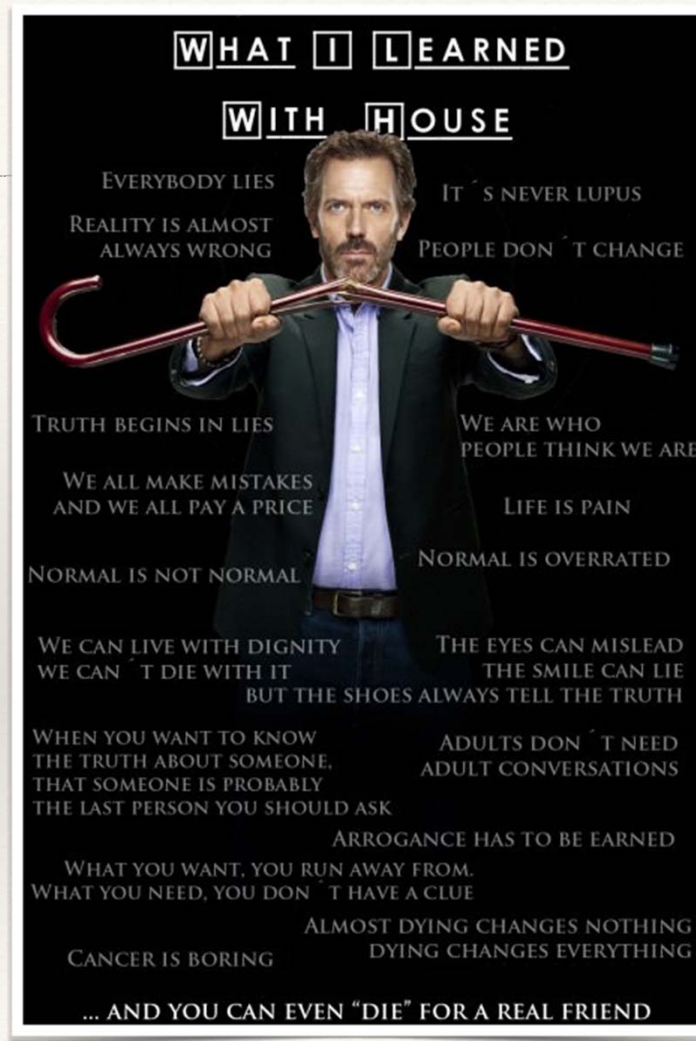
Movies and TV shows are built on the similarities and differences in personality and intelligence of identical twins, and explore the differences that result from diverse upbringing .



House MD

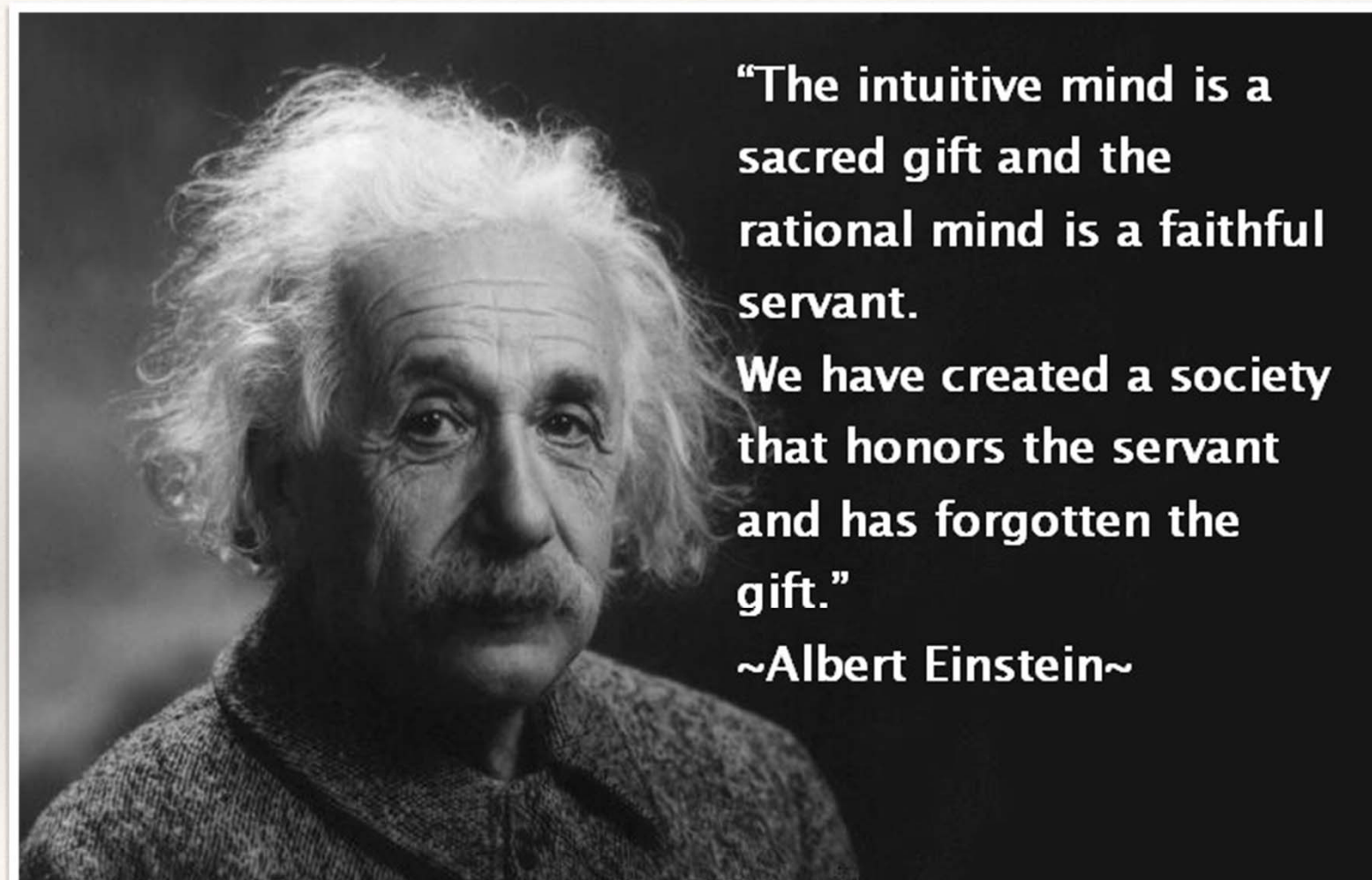
The summary of "abnormal" as presented by the media.

- ❖ Dr. Gregory House is a perfect example of all the traits presented by the media: he is highly intelligent and successful professionally, but he lacks emotional intelligence. He can be seductive if he chooses to be so, but his purpose is usually to manipulate other people to achieve his own goals. He does not follow moral principles as understood by most of his peers.



Conclusion

- ❖ As initially stated, the products of the media, whether it is TV, movies or theatre, are instrumental in bringing difficult or complex scientific concepts to the understanding of ordinary people. Academic rigor is sometimes compromised in the process, but the scope of diffusion among laymen is so wide that it can almost compensate this problem.
- ❖ I was attracted by this topic because most of our ideas today are shaped by the entertainment industry, as are our expectations and ambitions.
- ❖ This is just a sample, I had to leave aside many popular films and TV shows that may be worth exploring in the future.



“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant.

We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

~Albert Einstein~

Sources:

- ❖ The Movie Database www.themoviedb.org
- ❖ IMDb – The internet Movie Database www.imdb.org
- ❖ Myers, David G. Psychology. Tenth Edition. Worth Publishers. Chapters 4,10,12,13, 14 and 15. E book 2013